

## Instructional Supervision in Nigerian Schools: Problems and Solutions

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**Abstract:** This paper discussed challenges hindering effective instructional supervision of schools in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the paper. The secondary data were gathered from print materials and online publications. The paper identified poor funding, shortage of supervisors, inadequate transportation facilities, poor capacity building programme, insecurity, shortage of supervision materials, poor communication skills, corruption and political instability as challenges hindering effective instructional supervision of schools in Nigeria. The paper hereby recommended an increment in the funding of school supervision.

**Keywords:** Instructional supervision, Schools.

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### Introduction

Instructional supervision in Nigeria started during the colonial era. Abubakar, Abubakar, & Danladi, (2017) observed that the supervision of schools in present-day Nigeria could be traced to the 1882 Education Ordinance. It was the first attempt by the colonial administration to establish any form of control over the development and growth of schools. The Ordinance provided for the establishment of a general board of education which was to appoint an inspector of schools in West Africa. This appointment marked the beginning of the recognition of the need for a form of inspectional service in the educational system (Emmanuel, Akinloye & Olaoye, 2014; Abubakar, et al 2017). The school like any organisation has problems; and the variety of problems which the school present can be identified through the processes by which its functions are performed. Instructional supervision is one of the strategies to identify school problems.

Abubakar, et al (2017) observed that instructional supervision is one of the processes by which school administration attempts to achieve acceptable standards of performance and results. It's the tool of quality control in the school system. The quantity and the quality of resources available to the school administration and the process adopted or followed by it, often create problems and challenges for the instructional supervisor. Carter (2000) instructional supervision is all efforts designated to schools towards providing leadership to the teachers and other educational workers for the improvement of classroom instruction".

Kamindo (2006) defined supervision as leadership for the improvement of instruction and ultimately student learning. These definitions suggest that the role of supervision is to improve teaching and learning through a deliberate emphasis on ways and means of instilling excellence in quality instruction. Supervision is a process which strives to stimulate others towards greater effectiveness or productivity. Ezekwugo (2005) instructional supervision is a planned programme required for the improvement of instruction. This implies that instructional supervision involves a set of activities, which are called to make the teaching-learning process better for the learner. Paul (undated) defined instructional supervision as the process of working

with head teachers, teachers and pupils to bring about improvement in instruction.

Kimosop (2002), instructional supervision is an expert technical service primarily concerned with studying and improving learning and pupils' growth. Instructional supervision can also be defined as the set of activities designed to improve the teaching-learning process. In Nigeria, there has been a critical analysis of what instructional supervision should be. Spears (2007) viewed instructional supervision as an internal process (micro-inspection). He opined that micro-inspection concerns itself with regular resource utilization and processes in a school and the maintenance of lines of action that promote productivity.

From above, instructional supervision is a programme of instruction designed to improve teachers' job performance and students' academic performance in schools. Instructional supervision is a combination of activities meant to advance the work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel in the school business. Instructional supervision is the process of improving teaching and learning in educational institutions because of realizing the goals of education. Instructional supervision is critical to the development of education.

On the importance of instructional supervision in school, Ekundayo, Oyerinde, & Kolawole (2013), noted that the essence of instructional supervision in schools is to ensure things are done the way they should be to achieve the stated objectives. Hence, the purpose of supervision of instruction includes: directly influencing the behaviour of teachers and the teaching process employed to promote students' learning; and to ensure that each teacher within the school system has been performing the duties to which he was scheduled, and cooperatively develop a favourable climate for effective teaching and learning. Other purposes of supervision of instruction according to Ogunsaju (1983), Olatoye (2006) and Chike-Okoli (2006) are:

- a) To know the performance of the teachers recruited to teach in the school system.
- b) To determine whether a teacher should be transferred, promoted, retrained or dismissed.
- c) To provide professional information to teachers.
- d) To improve the incompetent teachers.
- e) To discover special abilities or qualities possessed by teachers in the schools.
- f) To guide teachers to the sources of instructional materials.
- g) To provide a guide to staff development.
- h) To know the effectiveness of classroom management by the teachers.

There are various reasons for carrying out supervision in schools. One of the most crucial reasons is to ensure that each teacher within the school system has been performing the duties for which he/she was scheduled. Another cogent reason is to improve the effectiveness of teachers so that they can contribute maximally to the attainment of the system's goals (Adesina, 2001). For a supervisor to achieve the above-stated purpose the supervisor must have a clear understanding of what he wants in the supervision and how he can go about achieving the purposes. Other reasons for supervising schools are:

1. To improve the incompetent teachers,
2. To provide a guide for staff development,
3. To know the effectiveness of classroom management by the teachers,
4. To improve methods of teaching and learning,
5. To create a physical, social and psychological climate or environment favourable to learning.
6. coordinate and integrate all educational efforts and materials which will ensure continuity.
7. To enlist the co-operation of all staff members in serving their own needs and those of

others to prevent teaching difficulties,

8. To aid, inspire, lead and develop that security which liberates the creative spirit of the teacher.
9. To help teachers see more clearly the real ends of education and the special roles expected and how to work towards these goals,
10. To help the teachers to see the problems and needs of pupils and to help them solve these problems and provide as far as possible for most of their needs.
11. To induct beginning teachers into the mainstream of the school system and the teaching profession
12. To assess the “tone” of the school and identify some of its most urgent needs (Nwaogu, 2006).

The relevance of instructional supervision in schools cannot be underestimated. Instructional supervision is an instrument for quality attainment in schools. The success of any system of education is dependent on the inspection and supervision of instructions. The essence of supervision is therefore the monitoring of the performance of school staff, noting the merits and demerits and using befitting and amicable techniques to ameliorate the flaws while still improving on the merits thereby increasing the standard of schools and achieving educational goals. Thus, the concern of educational supervision is the improvement in teaching and environment to promote effective teacher performance and learning in the school.

### **The Basis for Instructional Supervision**

Ndubuisi, Ogunode & Constance, (2021) and Peretomode (1998) highlighted the following six points as the basis for supervision in the educational system.

1. Supervision should be geared towards the improvement of teaching and learning situations for the benefit of both teachers and learners.
2. Supervision should help in the identification of areas of strength of teachers which should be further developed. Areas of weakness should be identified and the teacher should be in an understanding manner to overcome them
3. Supervision should be democratically conducted to give recognition to the teachers and create a cordial working atmosphere based on good relations.
4. Supervision should be tailored towards ensuring that the general guidelines as provided in the curriculum are followed by the teachers.
5. There should be follow-up activities that should be directed at the improvement of identified areas of teachers' weaknesses.
6. Supervision should help the teachers in terms of self-discovery particularly in the areas of improvisation and the use of modern teaching aids as a basis for improving teaching strategies. Supervisors could help to introduce teachers to a variety of audio and visual materials that help to facilitate good teaching.

### **Procedures and Techniques for Instructional Supervision:**

Ndubuisi, Ogunode & Constance, (2021); Harris (1975), Goldhammer, Anderson & Krajewski, (1980) and Ogunsaju (2008) listed several procedures for instructional supervision. These procedures include the following:

1. **Classroom Observation:** Observing in the classroom is one of the most commonly used procedures of instructional supervision. This procedure involves the systematic live observation of a teacher and analyzing his or her classroom practices and the teaching and learning process. It is a situation where the teacher is working directly with the learners and the supervisor is present as a witness to observe systematically classroom events. During observation, the

supervisor also looks for planning and preparation, lesson presentation, teacher's personality and student-teacher interactions or relationships.

2. **Demonstration**: Demonstration is one of the most effective techniques for stimulating teachers' growth. It involves the presentation of prearranged series of events to a group for their viewing. To be effective, however, the demonstration should be realistic, practicable and devoid of any form of artificiality.

3. **Teacher Visitation**: This activity which is also referred to as "intervisiting" involves one teacher visiting and observing another teacher in action in another class within the same school (intra-class visitation) or in a class in another school (inter-school visitation). This procedure allows various categories of teachers to visit others in another school and watch them teach. This procedure is particularly helpful if the beginning or inexperienced teacher watches the experienced teacher in action, thus helping him to learn how to organize and manage students in the classroom, and to plan effectively and in the effective utilization of resources.

4. **Workshop**: This is another very useful procedure in instructional supervision. The activity involves a small group of people that are temporarily formed to discuss a specific topic, work on a common problem, and try to find solutions to a specific problem. A workshop may be organized at a particular time during the year to meet a particular need. In workshops, maximum emphasis on interaction and an optimum amount of critical analysis of ideas related to the problem or topic at hand is encouraged in a permissive topic-centred, face-to-face situation (Harris, 1975; Ogunsanju, 2006).

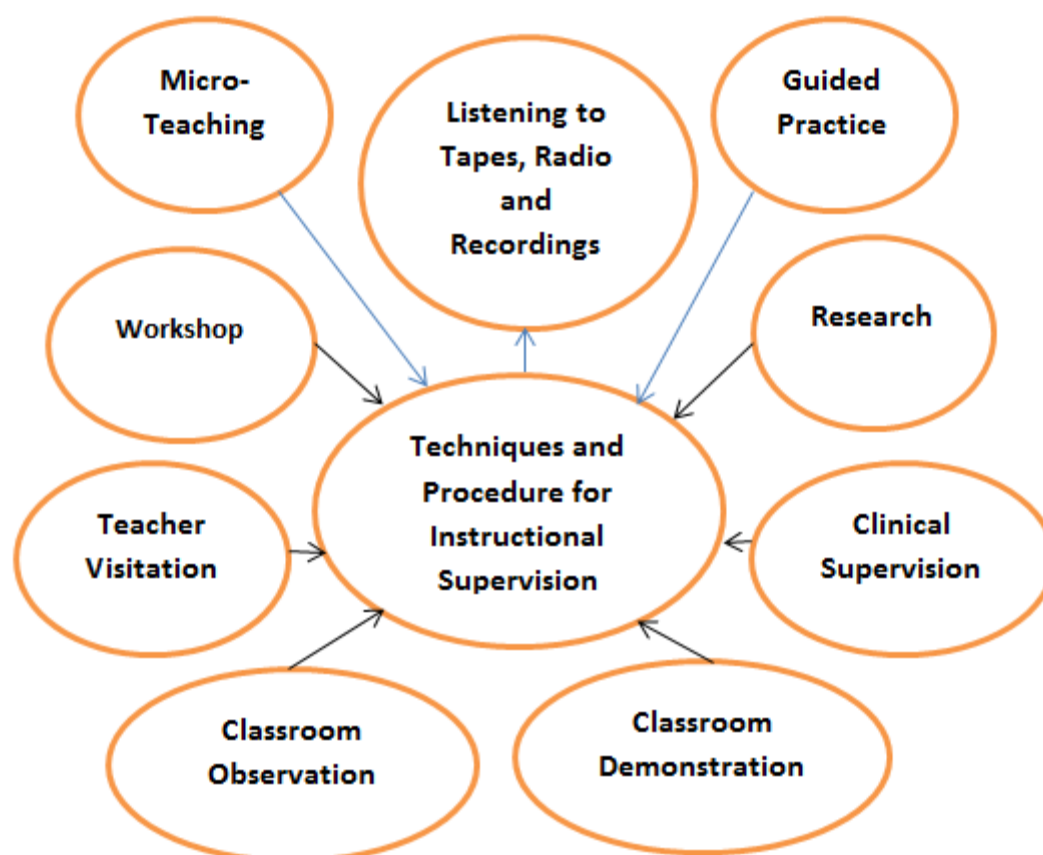
5. **Micro-teaching**: This activity is very essential for the training of both pre-service and in-service teachers. Ike (2008) provides a concise description of micro-teaching as a procedure that could be utilized by supervisors. He stated that micro-teaching is a teaching situation which is scaled down in terms of time, class size, and teaching complexity to allow the teacher to focus on a selected teaching strategy. It is designed to develop new skills and refine old ones.

6. **Listening to tape, radio, or recordings**: This supervisory procedure according to Harris (1975), involves using sound recordings to present ideas to one or more listeners in such a way as to help develop understanding or skill. Tape recordings of selected portions of a class meeting have been successful in stimulating group discussions and consequently changes in teacher behaviour that enhance teaching effectiveness. The use of visual presentations through the media of film, television or videotape is increasingly important in the supervisory process.

7. **Guided practice**: This supervisory procedure involves individualized or small group manipulative activities. It is an approach in which doing is emphasized rather than talking.

8. **Clinical supervision**: This is a method of supervision where the supervisor maintain a close working-relationship with the teacher to improve the teacher's teaching delivery abilities by analyzing the observations made on the teacher's classroom activities. It is a method of working closely with teachers to improve the quality of instruction.

9. **Research**: Research is the systematic and objective collection and analysis of data to find solutions to identified problems. It could be used as a procedure for instructional supervision. In this regard, the supervisor has to work with and through teachers to find solutions to problems of teaching and learning that confronts them instead of dictating solutions to or autocratically setting educational problems relating to teaching and teachers.



**Figure 1: Techniques and Procedures for Instructional Supervision**  
Source: Ogunode & Ayoko (2023)

### Problems Facing Instructional Supervision in Nigerian Schools

There are many problems militating against effective school supervision in Nigeria. Some of these problems include; poor funding, shortage of supervisors, inadequate transportation facilities, poor capacity-building programme, insecurity, shortage of supervision materials, poor communication skills, corruption and political instability.

#### Poor Funding

Poor funding of education in Nigeria has affected instructional supervision in Nigerian schools. Instructional supervision derives its allocation from the general education budgets that have been described as inadequate to fix educational challenges in Nigeria. Mark (2017) indicated that supervisors are not provided with imprest money or special allowances to take care of running costs and as such are tempted to ask for or receive financial gratifications from principals and teachers. This made them compromise the aim of supervision and reduce the personality of the supervisors. Onele & Aja, (2016); Olatoye (2006) and Adegrooye (1995) noted that challenges of economic reality made the government to be lacking zeal in funding institutions. Paul (2015) did a study and discovered that 90% of the respondents confirmed that inadequate funds for school inspection are a serious problem militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria. There has been gross underfunding of education generally in Nigeria. The inadequacy of funds to run supervision Services has almost completely paralyzed school supervision in Nigeria. Due to financial problems suffered in varying degrees by all Ministries of Education, touring advances are not always available to inspectors who therefore cannot travel as often as required for inspection, while the few available vehicles are not always in good condition due to acute shortage of funds (NOUN, 2007).

#### Shortage of Supervisors

Many schools in the country suffer poor supervision due to the shortage of qualified instructional

supervisors in some subject areas. Ogunode (2021) and Abubakar, et al (2017) noted that due to insufficient and unqualified supervisors in the educational system in many schools, most of the visited schools are not thoroughly assessed because the inspectors/supervisors are not enough for the subject areas. Another fact is that most inspectors are not specialists in important areas like science and technical subjects. Abubakar, et al (2017) and Anuna (2004) pointed out that many of the personnel utilized for the supervision of instruction did not have the prerequisite qualification and experience. Some states in Nigeria still employ and utilize graduate teachers without professional teacher qualifications as supervisors of the schools. Also most of the time the supervisors and inspectors supervised subjects in which they do not have academic competence. Furthermore, personnel without teaching experience in schools were deployed to supervise teachers. This practice hinders quality control, consequently, resulting in poor quality output while the academic standards of the students are affected (Ogunu, 2001; Abubakar, et al 2017).

### **Inadequate Transportation Facilities**

Poor transportation and communication network have affected instructional supervision in schools in Nigeria. This submission is attested to by Mark (2017) who claimed that inadequate transport facilities is another challenge that has prevented effective supervision of schools in Nigeria. Many state ministries and quality assurance units in majorities of states in Nigeria do not have adequate transport facilities to support the supervision programme of secondary school education in the various states of Nigeria. Mark (2017) revealed that many schools were inaccessible to supervisors due to poor roads, bad bridges and poor telephone network coverage. Also, supervisors were not provided with official vehicles and cellular phones to aid their movement and communication. This has greatly hampered the effectiveness of supervisors in their supervisory roles. Adeoye (1999) noted that the inaccessibility of most schools contributes to supervisors' failure in the supervision of instruction in Nigerian schools. Paul (2015) found out that Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents rated inadequate transportation as very serious/serious in his study. Inspectors need transports to visit schools assigned to them. Mobility is often hampered because there are no available vehicles for use by the inspectors. Most of the inspectors interviewed confirmed that their transport claims for supervisory travels are never paid. Inspection visits to schools especially those in a remote and far places, therefore, becomes very irregular.

### **Poor Capacity Building Programme**

Poor capacity development of supervisors is another problem that has militated against effective supervision of schools in Nigeria. Ogunode & Solomon (2021) and NOUN (2007) asserted that some instructional supervisors working in the various state ministries of education are not constantly exposed to training and retraining programmes and this is affecting the performance of the supervisors. Research has it that instructional supervisor that goes for training and retraining programme regularly performs better than those who do not go for training and retraining programme. The poor capacity development programme of instructional supervisors is responsible for the poor supervision of school education in Nigeria. Also, Noun (2007) argued that most of the personnel used as supervisors of instruction in most states in Nigeria do not have the pre-requisite teachers' qualifications and experience. Most supervisors lack professional supervisory skills. Noun (2007) noted that some supervisors still adopt autocratic, fault-finding styles of inspection. This makes the school head and teachers become apprehensive. This set of supervisors always assumes mastery of the subjects and expects the teacher to be subservient to them. They assume that supervisors have the knowledge and regard the teachers as inferior workers who should take instruction from them without questioning; this will always breed disdain and contempt instead of cooperation. Paul (2015) observed that in his study, ninety-five percent (95%) of the studied subjects rated the problem of poor capacity building as a very serious/serious problem that has hindered effective school supervision in Nigeria. It is quite unbelievable that in the 21st century, Nigeria is still operating school inspection and supervision

with non-professionals, which is staff without a degree in Educational Supervision.

### **Insecurity**

Insecurity in educational institutions implies the human resources within the educational institutions are in a state of fear or threat and lack peace to carry out their respective function. It is a situation where school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students are in a state of fear. The insecurity challenge is another major problem facing secondary schools in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part of the country. Insecurity has prevented effective school supervision in the country. Many school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students have been killed. Some school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and students have been kidnapped and many infrastructural facilities destroyed by Boko Haram members. School programmes have been disrupted due to the closing down of schools in Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and north central Nigeria. World Bank (2018) disclosed that since 2009, Boko Haram has conflicted with the Nigerian government, affecting nearly 15 million people. So, what has been the impact of Boko Haram on education in Nigeria, particularly in the northern region? The quick answer is: quite significant. Boko Haram has targeted the Nigerian education system, assaulting schools, students, and teachers in Northeast Nigeria and disrupting access to education and social services, especially for young people. Teachers have been threatened, and in some cases, killed. Schools have been damaged and destroyed, and often transformed into shelters for internally displaced people (IDP). Schools that remain in operation across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states are overcrowded and unable to meet the needs of the host population and the IDP. The cable (2018) reported that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says Boko Haram has killed 2,300 teachers in Nigeria's northeast since the start of the insurgency in 2009. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) acknowledged that insecurity in Nigeria has prevented effective supervision of educational institutions. The high rate of insecurity in Northern Nigeria is affecting the supervision of secondary schools across the various states in the Northern part of Nigeria. Boko Haram members have killed many students, teachers and school administrators by fighting against Western education in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

### **Shortage of Supervision Materials**

Inadequate Instructional supervision materials and equipment also militated against effective instructional supervision in schools in Nigeria. Ogunode, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Akin-Ibidiran (2021); Onele & Aja, (2016) and Musa (2015) disclosed that supervisors are not provided with stationeries, computers and projectors which are necessary for their job. Also, Adeoye (1999) pointed out that supervisors lack relevant materials tools and resources necessary for the effective execution of their functions. In all, it was discovered that supervision of instruction has been hampered by many factors ranging from inadequate personnel to inadequate materials and equipment. Abubakar, et al (2017) observed that Supervisors are faced with the obstacle of insufficient materials. This is a serious problem which hinders their assignment. The job of supervision is done through the use of material resources. What materials to use, and how many are available to the instructional supervisor may depend on the type of supervision envisaged. The types of materials or equipment needed may also depend on whether the instructional supervisor is internal or external personnel (Ani, 2007; Abubakar, et al 2017). Ogunode, Olatunde-Aiyedun, & Akin-Ibidiran (2021) did a study and concluded that the shortage of supervisors is one of the problems of school supervision in Nigeria.

### **Poor Communication Skills**

Effective communication is key to attaining effective school supervision. Communication is critical in the business of school supervision. The supervisors are expected to possess effective communication skills that will help them communicate well with the teachers. Abubakar, et al (2017) observed that many supervisors including the school head and departmental heads do not have effective means to communicate with their staff. This is due to inadequate communication skills. Teachers are sometimes demoralized due to poor communication. Also, Peretemode



(2009) disclosed that communication is the most essential tool in a supervisory relationship. The supervisor must be versatile in the act of communicating to avoid a situation where the message can be misinterpreted. Poor communication skills among the supervisors have been identified as barriers to effective school supervision in most Nigerian schools (Ogunode, 2021).

### **Corruption**

Corruption is another problem facing the supervision of educational institutions in Nigeria. Corruption has penetrated Nigerian educational institutions. Funds released for supervision programmes in many states, ministries of education and agencies have been mismanaged, looted or misappropriated by some educational officers and school principals. The high level of corruption in the ministries of education across the states is responsible for the ineffective supervision of schools in Nigeria. A public survey released by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) reports high levels of corruption in public institutions in Nigeria for the past 5 years. Of the five major public institutions surveyed, the police emerged as the most corrupt, with the power sector identified as the second most corrupt in the country today. Other public institutions identified as corrupt by 70 percent of Nigerians surveyed are the judiciary, education and health ministries. The survey reveals that the level of corruption has not changed in the last five years. The funds made available for the supervision of education sometimes end up in private pockets. Public funds made for the provision of educational services have been diverted and mismanaged. Ekundayo, Oyerinde, & Kolawole (2013) stated that both the school administrators, as well as instructional supervisors, are found guilty in this regard. Unholy collaboration between the supervisor and the school administrators on account of funds meant to procure necessary materials for the school system would not augur well for instructional supervision in secondary schools. When funds are misappropriated in schools, instructional supervisors are in the best position to identify this problem but if they are been duly rewarded, such problems will continue unabated which would affect the standards that should be achieved in the school system.

### **Political instability**

Political instability in Nigeria has constituted a problem that has prevented effective school supervision in Nigeria. Ogunode (2021); Ogunode, & Richard (2021) and Abubakar, et al (2017) agreed that the political atmosphere in Nigerian states does not support effective supervision of schools because of the unstable political environment. The change in government and administration in the various states across the country is affecting the effective supervision of schools. Ekundayo, et al (2013) observed that the frequent change of government usually brings about an incessant change of government policies regarding instructional supervision. In Nigeria, it is common thing that successive administrations always discontinue the policy and programme put in place by the previous administration. This singular act usually affects the effective supervision of instruction in schools. In other words, inconsistent policies on how instruction in schools should be supervised and the categories of people to be involved would adversely affect and pose a big challenge to instructional supervision especially in secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion and Way Forward**

Instructional supervision is the process of improving teaching and learning in educational institutions in-view of realizing the goals of education. Instructional supervision is critical to the development of education. It is an instrument used to improve quality in schools. This paper discussed challenges hindering instructional supervision in Nigerian schools. The paper concluded that poor funding, shortage of supervisors, inadequate transportation facilities, poor capacity-building programmes, insecurity, shortage of supervision materials, poor communication skills, corruption and political instability are the challenges to effective instructional supervision in Nigerian schools. To solve the problems identified, the paper recommended the following:



- a) The government should increase the funding of instructional supervision in educational institutions across the country;
- b) The government should employ more professional supervisors in the ministries and agencies
- c) More supervisory materials should be provided for all supervisors working in the state ministries and department in charge of supervision;
- d) The government should provide adequate transportation facilities for all the departments and agencies in charge of school supervision in the various locations across the federation;
- e) The government should ensure that training and retraining programmes are constantly organized for instructional supervisors across the federation in the areas of communication and human relations skills;
- f) The government should fight all forms of institutional corruption in the ministries and agencies of government handling instructional supervision in the country;

The government should address all issues and responsibilities for insecurity across the country and make provision for special security for school supervision across the country.

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